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U.S. NEWS

After fire kills 3, NYC officials say retailers, delivery apps must do more to ensure e-bike safety



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FILE - A delivery worker rides a motorized bicycle, July 25, 2023, in New York. On Monday, Nov. 13, New York City officials said that retailers and food delivery companies must do more to halt the proliferation of unsafe e-bike and e-scooter batteries after a fire blamed on an electric scooter's lithium ion battery killed three people over the weekend. (AP Photo/Seth Wenig, File)

BY KAREN MATTHEWS

Updated 2:15 AM UTC, November 15, 2023

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NEW YORK (AP) — New York City officials say retailers and food delivery companies must do more to halt the proliferation of unsafe e-bike and e-scooter batteries, after a fire blamed on an electric scooter's lithium ion battery killed three people over the

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NEW YORK (AP) — New York City officials say retailers and food delivery companies

must do more to halt the proliferation of unsafe e-bike and e-scooter batteries, after a fire blamed on an electric scooter's lithium ion battery killed three people over the weekend.

"There is blood on the hands of this private industry," Fire Commissioner Laura Kavanagh said at a news conference Monday in front of the charred remains of the Brooklyn row house where the early Sunday blaze killed Albertha West, 81, her son Michael West, 58, and her grandson Jamiyi West, 33.

Fire officials said the fire broke out on the ground floor of the building. "It's extensively damaged," Kavanagh said, adding that the battery that sparked the fire was for a "scooter of some kind."

The city has seen [hundreds of fires](#) linked to the lithium ion batteries that power electric bikes and scooters in the last few years. City officials have blamed off-market batteries and chargers that don't meet safety standards for many of the fires, and they have lobbied the federal government to strengthen regulations governing the sale of e-bikes and batteries.

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But Kavanagh said companies also have a role to play too.

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"Retailers like Amazon and Walmart need to stop selling devices that are not safety certified by a national testing laboratory, and food service apps like Grubhub and Uber Eats need to do more to ensure the safety of their workers who depend on these bikes to make a living," she said.



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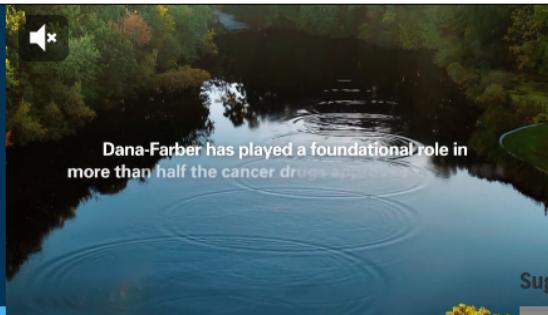
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Walmart officials said in a statement, "Walmart has zero tolerance for fraudulent sellers or the sale of products with false claims. Like our customers, we expect sellers and suppliers to provide accurate and honest descriptions about their products. When we identify a false claim, we take action to protect our customers and maintain their trust."

Amazon said in a statement, "We strive to ensure all products offered in our store to comply with applicable laws, regulations and Amazon policies—including NYC Local Law 39. We ensure our selection meets industry-accepted standards, and we develop innovative tools to prevent the sale of unsafe products."



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